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**SANGER MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ARMED ROBBERY OF
PARLIER POST OFFICE**

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that SALOMON SOTO, 26, of Sanger, California, pleaded guilty today to armed robbery of the Parlier, California Post Office. The charge is contained in a Superseding Indictment unsealed this afternoon in U.S. District Court. That indictment charges SOTO and CARLOS DURAN, 40, also of Sanger, with robbery of a U.S. Post Office and receipt and possession of stolen U.S. Postal property.

This case is the product of an ongoing extensive investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service with the assistance of the Sanger and Fresno Police Departments. DURAN remains a fugitive and is currently being sought by law enforcement authorities. He is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Marlon Cobar, who is prosecuting the case, SOTO admitted that on November 19, 2002 at approximately 11:15 a.m., he drove two individuals to the Parlier Post Office in a Chevy pick-up truck. At the time he drove those two individuals to the Post Office, the defendant knew that they were intending to rob it as they had agreed to do so in his presence.

In today's court hearing before U.S. District Judge Oliver W. Wanger, SOTO also admitted that at the time the two individuals entered the Post Office, he saw them wearing bandanas and beanies to disguise their identities. SOTO said that he knew those two individuals were armed as he saw them carrying 9 millimeter and 45 millimeter caliber guns into the Post Office. Once the two individuals were inside the Post Office, SOTO waited outside in the Chevy pick-up truck as the getaway driver. As the two individuals exited the Post Office after the robbery, they entered the pick-up truck and he drove them away. Later that day, SOTO and the two individuals counted the proceeds of the robbery and divided them among themselves. Those proceeds included cash and U.S. Postal Money Orders.

SOTO faces a maximum sentence of ten years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and a three-year term of supervised release. He is in custody and is scheduled to appear on October 12, 2004 for sentencing.

A copy of this news release is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home>, select Press Releases.

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